United Nations A/CN.10/PV.231

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

231st Meeting
Friday, 30 April 1999, 3.40 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Abdelaziz . . . . . (Egypt)

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Reports by Chairmen of Working Groups

The Chairman: We are approaching the final stages of the 1999 substantive session. In this context, we will start this last meeting with the adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies on the various agenda items, contained in documents A/CN.10/1999/CRP.4, CRP.5 and CRP.6, and, under agenda item 7, the consideration and adoption of the draft report of the Commission, contained in document A/CN.10/1999/CRP.3. These documents have been circulated in all languages, except the report of Working Group I. In accordance with our agreed working timetable, we will first consider and adopt the report of the Commission and thereafter hear concluding statements by delegations.

I would like to inform members that the list of speakers is open to those who would like to speak, that is to say, for the concluding statements to be made after we finish with the adoption of the reports.

To start the process of the consideration and adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies on individual agenda items, I would like to call on the Chairman of each Working Group to introduce the report of his Group to the Commission.

If there are no remarks at this stage, I now call on the Chairman of Working Group I, on agenda item 4, "The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned" to introduce the report (A/CN.10/1999/CRP.4) of that Working Group.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador), Chairman of Working Group I *(spoke in Spanish)*: I have the pleasure of introducing the report of Working Group I, on item 4 of the Disarmament Commission's agenda, entitled "The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned" (A/CN.10/1999/CRP.4). The Working Group held 17 meetings between 14 April and 30 April 1999. At the same time it held intense consultations to study the text of the Chairman's paper, which I presented as the basis for the deliberations. That paper took into account the work done during the substantive sessions of the Disarmament Commission in 1997 and 1998. The deliberations covered the working documents introduced by delegations, which also became part of the basis for our negotiations. During the meetings, delegations presented texts of their proposals, which were finally compiled into a single document that greatly facilitated the work of our Working Group. As a result of the meetings and consultations held, I was able to present to the Working Group four revisions to my document, which was finally adopted by consensus this morning.

I take great satisfaction in reporting this achievement, which was due mainly to the work of the delegations that participated in the debates and consultations. They demonstrated talent, resolve, flexibility and the highest degree of responsibility in the search for commitments aimed at the common good. The international community now has guidelines that will stimulate and encourage the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

99-85318 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

I would like to express my very special thanks to the Secretariat and to Mr. Timur Alasaniya, Mr. Randy Rydell and Ms. Lidija Komatina for their constant support. On behalf of the Working Group and on my own personal behalf, I would like to express very special thanks to you, Mr. Chairman. Your presence during the most difficult moments of our negotiations made it possible to achieve this success, which will undoubtedly be of considerable importance for the international community. I have an enormous feeling of satisfaction for the work done and I feel honoured and proud to have been part of this very important process.

The Chairman: If there are no comments on the report or on the Chairman's presentation, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group I, on item 4, as contained in document A/CN.10/1999/CRP.4.

The report was adopted.

The Chairman: Now I would like to move to the report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5, entitled "The fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament", as contained in document A/CN.10/1999/CRP.5. I call on the Chairman of Working Group II.

Mr. Effendi (Indonesia), Chairman of Working Group II: During these past three weeks — or should I say, during these past four consecutive years — we held negotiations on the agenda item entitled "The fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament". After extensive and intensive formal negotiations and informal consultations, the Chairman proposed a paper, and, during this session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission alone, also proposed two package proposals. In each of those proposed packages, a statement was included stressing that should a consensus be reached, it would prejudice neither the positions of delegations nor their rights to raise relevant issues at the special session itself or during the preparatory process.

The Chairman could not find a more balanced and stronger package language to protect and secure each and every position of all delegations in the package proposal.

During the final minutes of the final meeting available for Working Group II, the vast majority of delegations overwhelmingly reiterated their agreement to the Chairman's package proposals, but unfortunately, it fell short of gaining the agreement of all members. The Chairman was then approached by many delegations, which told him that Working Group II should make a final decision. They indicated that it was not negotiations on wording that were at issue any more, but rather the necessary political will. Thus, at that final meeting Working Group II decided that it was not able to reach a consensus on the final result of the negotiations on the objectives and agenda for the fourth special session. At the same time, Working Group II adopted its final report, which is now before delegations.

In conclusion, I convey my sincere gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, to the members of the Secretariat and to the members of the Working Group, who have so graciously extended their cooperation to help the Chairman of the Group as he sought the consensus that has eluded us. My apologies go to all members for my failure to secure that consensus.

The Chairman: I do not see that any apology is needed; it is for the Group to decide whether or not it wants to achieve consensus on a specific subject.

May I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5, as contained in document A/CN.10/1999/CRP.5?

The report was adopted.

The Chairman: We turn now to the report of Working Group III, on agenda item 6, entitled "Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N", as contained in document A/CN.10/1999/CRP.6. I call on the Chairman of Working Group III, Mr. Michael Hoey of Ireland, to introduce the report.

Mr. Hoey (Ireland), Chairman of Working Group III: I have the honour to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the report of Working Group III under agenda item 6. The Working Group held 12 meetings between 14 and 28 April, during which it considered a paper presented by its Chairman. Following intensive discussion on the substance of the paper, four amended versions were presented. At its meeting on 28 April, the Working Group adopted by consensus the guidelines that are annexed to the report.

It was a source of particular personal satisfaction to me to have had the honour of chairing the Working

Group in this, the third year of its consideration of this item, as I was fortunate enough to have been elected to chair the Working Group three years ago at the beginning of its work. I also had the advantage of being elected well in advance of the session, and as a consequence was able to carry out some extremely useful consultations. This is a practice that I would warmly recommend for future sessions.

When we began our work three years ago, there was some hesitation on the part of many delegations about the nature and scope of what we were undertaking, and understandable reticence given the political sensitivity of several issues which were being considered. I am glad to report that since then there has been an evolution in the position of many delegations, and the fact that the guidelines were adopted by consensus in a remarkably painless process is, I believe, both significant and encouraging.

Allow me to pay a special tribute to last year's Chairman of the Working Group, the Permanent Representative of Uganda, Ambassador Semakula Kiwanuka. He brought to our work not only his enormous wisdom and intelligence, but an authority which helped to remind us of the importance of the issues which we were addressing.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to all the delegations that participated so actively and constructively in our work, and to pay tribute to their cooperation and spirit of compromise, which enabled us to reach a consensus on the guidelines. Our work was always conducted in an excellent atmosphere in which many issues of substance and importance were raised. When differences of emphasis emerged, exchanges between delegations were always conducted with good humour and in a spirit of mutual respect for the views expressed. Our debates were particularly enriched by the contribution of delegations with recent experience of post-conflict situations in their countries and of practical disarmament measures that were undertaken to help consolidate peace. Their views were, in my opinion, unique and invaluable, serving to remind us of the very real problems which we were addressing.

At the same time, as the title of our Working Group required, we turned our attention to the regional and global aspects of conventional arms control. We were reminded in particular that the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons, the absence of control to arrest this and the illicit arms trade continue to have a negative effect on the internal security and socio-economic development of affected States. The guidelines therefore represent an important new development in the way in which we address post-conflict situations, and in particular in the manner in which we integrate practical disarmament measures. Many of the measures which have been suggested have special relevance to a conflict which is approaching solution and to a recently ended conflict, and as a consequence to preventing a conflict from re-emerging.

Finally, given the increasing number of initiatives on the question of small arms and light weapons, it was surely appropriate and timely that the United Nations should play its role by addressing this issue in as comprehensive a way as possible.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Secretariat for all their assistance. In particular, I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. Sergei Cherniavsky, Secretary of the Working Group, for the efficiency and enthusiasm with which he organized our meetings, and for the wonderful stories he recounted to me of his experiences in the United Nations. I should like to convey a personal word of thanks to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, for his generous support and for allowing me to pick the brains of his excellent colleagues in the Department for Disarmament Affairs. I was particularly fortunate in having one of his colleagues by my side throughout the duration of the session: Mr. Nazir Kamal of the Department for Disarmament Affairs is a comparatively new member of a comparatively new department, but his experience and knowledge of the range of issues we were dealing with was invaluable to me. His speed at finding clever and always acceptable formulas in the English language made even an Irishman gasp in admiration. I should also like to thank the interpreters and conference officers for their demonstrated professionalism and cooperation.

But, Mr. Chairman, finally it is you to whom I have to express my thanks, for your guidance, encouragement, nerve-steadying skills, humour and wise counsel. You are, of course, a highly respected and trusted colleague to many of us here in New York. We see you as a friend to whom we can bring our problems and from whom we can seek advice. Perhaps we do that too often. But you disarm us with your wonderful laugh and you amaze us with your skills; they are in my experience unique. As always, it is a pleasure to work with you.

In conclusion, therefore, having regard to the revisions of the Chairman's paper which I introduced earlier, I have the honour to submit the report of Working Group III to the Commission for its consideration and approval.

The Chairman: May I take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group III, on agenda item 6, as contained in document A/CN.10/1999/CRP.6, and as orally amended in its paragraphs 2, 27 and 50?

The report, as orally amended, was adopted.

The Chairman: Now that the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission have been adopted, I would like to thank the Chairmen of the three Working Groups for their dedication. The Commission is deeply indebted to them for their effective leadership in guiding the deliberations of the Working Groups on the three very complex issues we have on our agenda.

We will now begin consideration of the draft report of the Disarmament Commission (A/CN.10/1999/CRP.3).

I have the pleasure to give the floor to the Rapporteur of the Commission, Ms. Gaile Ramoutar, the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, to introduce the draft report.

Ms. Ramoutar (Trinidad and Tobago), Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission: As Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission, I have the honour and pleasure to introduce the draft report of the Commission on its 1999 session, as contained in document A/CN.10/1999/CRP.3, which delegations have before them for consideration.

As in previous years, the draft report consists of four chapters: "Introduction", "Organization and work of the 1999 substantive session", "Documentation" and "Conclusions and Recommendations". Chapter IV will contain the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, which addressed, respectively: "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned"; "Fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament"; and "Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N".

The reports of Working Groups I, II and III, which considered these items, have just been adopted. The annexes to the draft report will contain the results of the deliberations of these Working Groups. All items were in their final year of deliberation. The draft report contains a factual description of the Commission's work and proceedings during its session. Other issues were discussed in the Committee of the Whole and are reflected in paragraphs 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the draft report.

Here I should like to draw the attention of delegations to the following changes to the draft report.

First, on page 4, in paragraph 7, lines 5-6, the words "States Members of the United Nations that are members of the" should be deleted, and the words "and associated States" inserted after the words "European Union". Those lines should therefore read "on behalf of the European Union and associated States".

Secondly, in paragraph 9, delete the last word of line 2, "disarmament", and insert the following words: "draft medium-term plan for disarmament for the period 2002-2005".

I should now like to turn to paragraph 10 of the draft report, also on page 4. After consultation with delegations, it was decided that the following change would be made to the text: delete all of paragraph 10 except for the first sentence. Paragraph 10 should therefore read:

> "On 23 and 29 April, delegations made general comments on the draft medium-term plan for the disarmament programme on the understanding that the comments did not represent any final views or formal endorsement of the draft plan."

Finally, I should like to seize this opportunity to express my gratitude to all delegations for their unfailing support. A special tribute should be paid to you first of all, Mr. Chairman, and to Under-Secretaries-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Mr. Jin Yongjian and Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, as well as to the members of the Bureau of the Commission, the eight Vice-Chairmen of the Commission and the Chairmen of the three Working Groups, under whose skilful guidance the Working Groups conducted their work during this session.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the staff of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and of the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their assistance and support at

all times; to the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Timur Alasaniya; and to the Secretaries of the Working Groups, who performed their duties tirelessly.

With this brief introduction, I present the report of the Disarmament Commission as contained in document A/CN.10/1999/CRP.3, as orally revised, for the consideration and approval of the Commission.

The Chairman: I propose now that we consider the report chapter by chapter, in a very efficient way.

Since there are no comments on chapter I, "Introduction", paragraphs 1 and 2, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 1 and 2 were adopted.

The Chairman: Since there are no comments on chapter II, "Organization and work of the 1999 substantive session", paragraphs 3 to 16, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 3 to 16, as orally revised, was adopted.

The Chairman: Since there are no comments on chapter III, "Documentation", paragraphs 17 to 20, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 17 to 20 were adopted.

The Chairman: Since there are no comments on chapter IV, "Conclusions and recommendations" — paragraphs 21 to 25 — which will contain the reports of the Working Groups that we have just adopted, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 21 to 25 were adopted.

The Chairman: Having adopted all paragraphs of the report, the Commission will now take up the draft report as a whole. May I take it that the Disarmament Commission wishes to adopt the draft report of the Disarmament Commission as a whole, as orally revised?

The draft report, as orally revised, was adopted.

Concluding statements

Mr. Albin (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Mexican delegation wishes to express its deep gratitude to you, Sir, and to the Chairmen of the three Working Groups for their efforts to achieve satisfactory results at this session. We welcome the spirit of compromise that prevailed among delegations, which enabled us to adopt by consensus a number of principles and guidelines for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and a series of practical measures on conventional disarmament to consolidate peace in post-conflict situations. These consensus make it clear that when there is political will, States Members of the United Nations can make progress in the area of disarmament.

We regret, however, that this spirit of compromise did not prevail in the negotiations on the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Although we acknowledge that at this session we were able to see some signs of greater openness on the part of some delegations, it was clear that these signs were not sufficient to achieve the necessary consensus. In my delegation's view, the Commission should not carry out a substantive debate. It would be appropriate to conduct such a substantive debate during the special session itself. The delegation of Mexico is convinced of the need to hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, a view that has been stated by the overwhelming majority of delegations.

We must continue our work. My delegation is convinced that the during the next session of the General Assembly, the First Committee will provide us with a new opportunity to complete the work of this collective effort to convene the special session. Mexico trusts that in the General Assembly we will be able to rely on the cooperation and continued interest of all delegations so that we can achieve that goal.

I cannot conclude without expressing to you, Mr. Chairman, to the Chairmen of the Working Groups, to the other officers of the Commission and particularly to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala, our gratitude for their guidance and for stamping our discussion with a spirit of cooperation and camaraderie that made it possible to achieve results that, if not excellent, are at least satisfactory.

Mr. Seibert (Germany): On behalf of the European Union (EU), I would like to thank you most sincerely,

Mr. Chairman, for your efficient and energetic guidance of our work during the last three weeks. Even though we have not been able to attain all our objectives, we have been able to successfully conclude two issues which have occupied us for the last three years. Measured against the performance of this body in some other years, this must be seen as a remarkable success. I feel sure that all delegations will concur when I say that much of the merit for this success is due to your chairmanship, Sir. Not only was your visible and invisible hand felt in the general directions given to our work, but you did not shrink from actively engaging in the negotiations with constructive proposals when matters of contention were threatening to hold up our work or were even endangering its successful outcome.

Even the most capable and talented need a little bit of luck to fully deploy their talents. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, you were very lucky to have the support of very capable Chairmen of the Working Groups. Without their careful preparation and skilful guidance of our work on this year's three issues, we would not have been able to arrive at the results we have obtained.

Success speaks for itself, but it is not the only yardstick of merit. Even though we did not reach consensus in one Working Group, its Chairman did lead us very near to success, and nobody could have achieved more under the present circumstances. We have already had several opportunities to express our appreciation in the Working Groups, but I would like to take this occasion to repeat once again, in plenary meeting, our most sincere thanks to Mr. Michael Hoey, to Ambassador Arizal Effendi and to Ambassador Emilio Izquierdo for all their efforts.

At this session we were able to witness the first positive effects of the decisions to reform the working mechanisms of the Disarmament Commission. It was clearly perceptible that the early appointment of the Chairmen of the Disarmament Commission and its Working Groups allowed for the earlier and more careful preparation of our work. We hope that the other decisions will lead to equally noticeable improvements in the future. We should continue, however, to reflect on all possible ways to improve further the effective use of expertise and resources in this body.

The European Union welcomes the adoption of guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Success was made possible by focusing on general principles and objectives which consistently and thoroughly elaborate the core principle of arrangements freely arrived at. We believe that the set of guidelines thus formulated draws important conclusions from past experience, which will give further impetus to ongoing efforts and prove valuable for future efforts.

Even in the fourth and last year of our deliberations, consensus on the objectives and agenda of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) has eluded us. During these four years, the European Union has actively worked towards a consensus and has shown a high degree of flexibility and willingness to compromise. It was in this spirit that the EU, in spite of some misgivings, was willing to accept, together with the vast majority of delegations, the Chairman's paper of last year, as well as the two compromise proposals of the Chairman this year. Even though the untiring efforts of the Chairman led us very close to an agreement on wording, it finally became clear that the Working Group was not able to overcome the fundamental and crucial problem that I pointed out in the EU statement in the general debate and that has been the true stumbling block for the last four years. We must recognize that we would not have fulfilled our mandate — to reach a basic consensus that would provide us with some reasonable confidence that an SSOD IV would not be a repetition of the failures of the past — if we had tried to hide this fact behind some compromise wording.

The EU is particularly satisfied with the outcome of the deliberations of Working Group III, thanks to the excellent chairmanship and determined leadership of Mr. Michael Hoey. The adoption of the guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N, represents a major step forward in an area that has a direct impact on the security and stability of concerned countries and subregions. The EU believes that, despite the necessary compromises which take into account different views and concerns of delegations, the document represents a substantial conceptual contribution towards consolidating peace in post-conflict situations and combating the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons.

The purpose of that concept is to help those States and regions that suffer from conflict and from the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of weapons and,

at the same time, to help build a bridge between various groups of countries. The document should be seen as a tool upon which the international community of States, as well as regions, subregions and countries concerned, can draw, in order to consolidate peace after conflicts, particularly internal conflicts, and to prevent such situations from emerging or re-emerging.

Finally, let me thank Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala and his staff, Conference Services, the interpreters and all others who have contributed to our work for their valuable help.

Ms. Crittenberger (United States of America): My delegation extends its gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the three Working Group Chairmen for your painstaking efforts to bring the three issues before the Disarmament Commission this year to a satisfactory conclusion. We know that much work went into preparing the ground for success and are disappointed that not all these efforts met with equal success. We also appreciate the support offered by the Secretariat, its staff, the interpreters, conference officers and others, and some of us are particularly thankful to the Fifth Committee for the comfortable quarters found in Conference Room 5.

The United States delegation was pleased to be able to join the consensus in adopting the paper, "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned". The United States has long supported the establishment and functioning of nuclear-weapon-free zones. When all States of a region have agreed on arrangements that reflect their joint decisions and respect relevant international principles, a nuclear-weapon-free zone can make a valuable contribution to the global non-proliferation regime and enhance regional and international security. The paper outlines the objectives, purposes, principles and guidelines for nuclear-weapon-free zones, thereby facilitating their effective operation and further development.

As you are well aware, Mr. Chairman, this year's negotiations proved extended and arduous. We doubt Working Group I would have reached agreement if it had not benefited from your active involvement in the session's concluding days, during which you showed substantial energy, imagination and persistence in developing compromise wording that helped resolve intractable issues. We also commend the equally sincere efforts of Ambassador Izquierdo of Ecuador, who chaired the Working Group throughout the session's three weeks.

Paragraph 32 of the paper addresses questions that the United States considers extremely important. We would like to record our understanding of that paragraph.

Let me start with a simple statement of fact. Each State is free to conclude international or regional security agreements that it believes are best suited to its own security needs. There are many possible approaches, including the option of reaching agreement with other States of its region on establishing a nuclear-weapon-free-zone. But each State is entitled to decide that for itself, and it may prefer methods that are not compatible with the establishment of such a zone. In any case, the obligations that a State undertakes under a nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty must be consistent will all its obligations under other agreements related to regional or international security.

The provisions of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaty must likewise be consistent with international law and cannot affect the rights and obligations recognized in the Charter of the United Nations. Paragraph 32 effectively makes that point. But because the paragraph's wording is very general, we would like to call attention to an aspect that the United States considers particularly important: the provisions of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaty cannot affect the right to individual and collective self-defence, as recognized in Article 51 of the Charter. This is fundamental, and the functions and roles of a nuclear-weapon-free zone must be understood in that context.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, the United States has questioned the value of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), especially when the two previous such sessions produced no substantive results and when the international disarmament and non-proliferation calendar is already so charged that time can hardly be found for meetings currently planned. However, the United States accepted the notion of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament because a forward-looking meeting that could elaborate an agenda for multilateral disarmament and arms control in the post-cold-war world could serve a useful function. There would, of course, be some hope of doing so only if States displayed a willingness to compromise and to limit their aspirations to the attainable.

Unfortunately, such a willingness did not in the end completely emerge. In spite of four years of painstaking work, it is regrettable that consensus continued to elude

the Disarmament Commission on the objectives and agenda of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. My delegation thought the Working Group II Chairman was on the right track with his compromise proposals. Although neither of his proposals was what my Government would have preferred, the United States could have accepted either of them, or even last year's Chairman's text, in the spirit of compromise necessary for an eventual SSOD IV to succeed. We regret that a few delegations could not join consensus on these objectives and agenda. Under these circumstances an SSOD IV would be of little value because the same fundamental disagreements we have encountered over the past four years would only follow us to such a meeting.

We thank Ambassador Effendi and his predecessor, for their tireless efforts to find a fair and balanced approach to objectives and an agenda for an SSOD IV. Indeed, if any apologies are in order, they should be made to the Chairman by the delegations for having made his task so difficult. That the proposals put forward by the Chairman did not find consensus is perhaps an unfortunate indicator that some do not share the view that the time has come for a re-examination of multilateral arms control and disarmament guidelines, priorities and objectives.

The United States delegation was pleased that Working Group III succeeded in reaching agreement on guidelines on conventional arms control, with particular emphasis on the consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures. We join others in congratulating the Chairman of that Working Group and thanking him for the efforts he put into reaching agreement. Without his skill and hard work, agreement would not have been possible.

We consider the paper a most useful compilation of measures that could help bring peace to societies torn by war and that could help promote confidence, trust and peaceful relations more generally. It draws on the practical experience of peacekeepers and was greatly enriched by the comments of representatives from States, especially in Africa, that have had all too much experience with post-conflict peace-building. While the paper is not prescriptive, it provides a list — what some have described as a grab bag — of measures that States or other parties could apply in post-conflict situations.

As with any compromise, this paper is not wholly to the liking of the United States delegation. We regret, for example, the deletion of any reference to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We also find the list of principles unbalanced. While the section on principles, as well as the rest of the paper, mentions the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States several times, it makes no mention of respect for human rights, without which durable peace cannot be assured.

Let me also make it clear that the United States cannot subscribe to a blanket prohibition on the export of arms other than to Governments. In most cases it is a wise policy, but in some it could be morally unacceptable, prohibiting individuals or groups from defending themselves against the persecutions of tyrants.

This paper and the discussions over the last three years leading to its approval form part of the increasing attention the international community has been paying in recent years to issues involving small arms and light weapons and the role of disarmament in peacekeeping operations. My delegation considers that those discussions and the agreed paper will help pave the way for concrete action on small arms — for example, at the upcoming international conference — and for more integrated approaches to post-conflict peace-building.

Mr. Tawuhare (United Kingdom): I would like to make a brief statement on behalf of the delegations of France and the United Kingdom.

As members of the European Union, both our delegations are, of course, fully associated with the statement delivered earlier by the Ambassador of Germany. In addition, we wish to associate both our delegations with the section of the statement just delivered by the representative of the United States of America concerning paragraph 32 of the paper on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which the Commission has adopted this afternoon.

Since I have the floor, could I conclude by offering the sincere thanks and appreciation of both our delegations for the admirable manner in which you, Sir, and the Chairmen of the Working Groups have conducted our work.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My first and very pleasant duty is to tell you, Sir, just how much we appreciate everything you have done as Chairman to ease our task as delegations. You had a particularly difficult job to do because this was the final year of our deliberations on all three substantive items on the agenda. We congratulate you on the professionalism and diplomatic touch with

which you steered our negotiations. We are just as grateful to the Chairmen of the three Working Groups, who have each shown extraordinary perseverance and patience. And, of course, I would be remiss if I did not thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for their assistance.

We are pleased that Working Group I on nuclear-weapon-free zones and Working Group III on conventional disarmament have completed their work, reaching agreements which, we believe, are valuable for a number of reasons. They will promote a clearer understanding of the concepts involved, as well as of the positions member States hold on these issues; they are useful as consensus guidelines; and they should constitute a valuable resource base on these subjects.

Working Group II on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) was in an exceptional and extended fourth year of work, guided by last year's General Assembly resolution 53/77 AA. We knew that consensus, which has eluded us for three years, would not be easy, but we were determined to try and we have worked hard with others to reach agreements on improvements on the Chairman's paper. We are therefore deeply disappointed that we still have not been able to achieve a consensus on the objectives and agenda of SSOD IV.

With members' permission, I would like to speak from a historical and, sadly now, elegiac perspective. We are saddened because the call for an SSOD IV was an Indian initiative. We first proposed it at the Ministerial Conference of the non-aligned, which your Government, Sir, hosted in Cairo in 1994. The negotiations there, which led to the ministerial decision, were chaired by Sri Lanka in the person of Mr. Jayanta Dhanapala, the present Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament. All three of us, therefore, have rather special reasons to be disappointed that an SSOD IV seems unlikely to take place.

From the autumn of 1994, the non-aligned have each year brought a resolution to the General Assembly, proposing the convening of an SSOD IV. As proponents of the idea, we were honoured that India was given the task of shepherding the draft through its very difficult years in the General Assembly. We accommodated the various requests made by our interlocutors to put off the target date for an SSOD IV from 1997 to 1999. In 1996, our colleagues in the European Union argued, and we in the Non-Aligned Movement agreed, that since all previous SSODs had been convened by consensus, an SSOD IV would also be held subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objectives, agenda and programme. We were pleased that, last year, the resolution in the General Assembly — which reaffirmed our common commitment to an SSOD subject to these conditions — was adopted without a vote. We hoped that this would also mean that we could make progress on the substance, without agreement on which, and in particular on the objectives and agenda, an SSOD would be meaningless.

From the outset, India and the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole have been quite clear about what we want from an SSOD. Following the end of the cold war, as the first General Assembly resolution adopted on the SSOD — resolution 49/75 I of 1994 — made clear, there were "positive changes in the international landscape" on the basis of which we could hope for a more positive outcome than SSOD II and SSOD III had achieved.

What was the objective situation? The international community had reached multilaterally negotiated agreements to ban biological and chemical weapons. Pragmatic measures had been taken on conventional weapons. By and large, the sanctity of outer space was being respected. The real danger lay in the paralysis on nuclear disarmament. With the end of the cold war, not only was there no further justification for retaining nuclear weapons, but we in the Non-Aligned Movement thought that the relaxation of tensions at the global level and the emergence of a new spirit governing relations among nations, which resolution 49/75 I also referred to, would permit us, through an SSOD, to reach agreements on the banning of nuclear weapons, as we had on the other weapons of mass destruction. That, quite plainly, was the rationale for an SSOD-IV.

Even then, there were those who felt that the nuclear-weapon States, in their own self-interest and heeding the wishes of the vast majority of member States, would not need to be urged. This is why these objectives were not spelt out in resolution 49/75 I. In the winter of 1994, States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) felt that this would also be needlessly contentious when they were about to go into a Review Conference, the first after the end of the cold war, at which the non-nuclear-weapon States parties felt that, in return for an indefinite extension, they would get from the nuclear-weapon States a firm commitment to move towards nuclear disarmament. We learnt shortly thereafter how brutally they were disabused.

Despite this experience, we have been told in the negotiations which we have held here that, in order to draw our partners into an SSOD IV, reticence or constructive ambiguity will get the international community what it wants. We observed the charade of the NPT Review Conference from a distance, but we are amazed that its participants should again put their trust in ambiguity. As far as India is concerned, unless, as the General Assembly resolution makes clear, we know exactly what the objectives, agenda and programme of the SSOD will be and have a consensus on them, we must reluctantly concede that the special session cannot and should not be held.

We are emphatic about this because, while we have been in session here, labouring on language which might paper over differences, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has held its summit and adopted its new Strategic Concept, paragraph 46 of which reads in part:

> "Taking into account the diversity of risks with which the Alliance could be faced, it must maintain the forces necessary to ensure credible deterrence and to provide a wide range of conventional response options. But the Alliance's conventional forces alone cannot ensure credible deterrence. Nuclear weapons make a unique contribution in rendering the risks of aggression against the Alliance incalculable and unacceptable. Thus, they remain essential to preserve peace."

There is no ambiguity here, constructive or otherwise. NATO has made it clear that its security depends on nuclear weapons and that these preserve peace. In response, other nuclear-weapon States have also reaffirmed the continuing centrality of nuclear weapons in their strategic doctrines. This is diametrically opposed to the views of the Non-Aligned Movement most recently reiterated at the Durban summit, where our heads of State described nuclear weapons as a threat to the survival of mankind and stressed in the Final document that,

> "with the end of the cold war the opportunity now exists for the international community to pursue nuclear disarmament as a matter of the highest priority." *(A/53/667, annex I, para. 113)*

As I said, Indian delegations to the Commission have been both transparent and consistent in the stand we have taken since 1994. We asked for SSOD IV because we felt it would move the international community towards nuclear disarmament. Last year, impelled by a worsening security environment marked by the overt and covert deployment of nuclear weapons in our region, we tested our own nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, we continue to believe that global peace and security can be ensured only by universal nuclear disarmament. At the Diplomatic Conference held in Rome last year to draft the Statute of the International Criminal Court, we proposed, as a nuclear-weapon State, that the use of nuclear weapons should be a crime under the Court's Statute. This was opposed by the other nuclear-weapon States and by many other countries that profess a commitment to nuclear disarmament.

In the Disarmament Commission we have continued to take the stand that unless we are clear that the primary objective of an SSOD IV will be to work for nuclear disarmament as spelt out in the principles and priorities adopted by consensus at SSOD I, there would be little point in having the session. The recent decisions adopted by the principal nuclear-weapon States and those who are sheltered under their umbrella, which I have just referred to, confirm both our fears and our conviction that this was the right stand to take.

We have heard the constant refrain that SSOD I is outdated given recent developments in the international arena, and that we must look at current realities. We do not agree that the consensus of SSOD I is obsolete. How can it be, except for those who believe the concept of nuclear disarmament is outdated or unnecessary? But in the context of the current international situation, we put forward a proposal at this session that was central in its likely impact on the willingness of nations to disarm: the inclusion of an agenda item whereby SSOD IV should address the consequences and implications of enforcement action for the maintenance of international peace and security by a State or association of States without the authorization of the United Nations Security Council.

It is axiomatic that any action that disrupts peace, security and stability will have a direct impact on the international disarmament agenda. NATO's unilateral military action in the Balkans will end sooner or later, but unless this precedent is analysed and abjured its repercussions on the disarmament agenda will endure. Action like this sets a dangerous precedent by putting a premium on violation of international law and non-adherence to disarmament treaties, since adherence to them will no longer afford protection against superior military force. Since States will want to rearm at higher levels of technology rather than depend on disarmament

for security, this issue is at the heart of any special session on disarmament that takes place in the future. This proposal was also not accepted, without any convincing reasons given; indeed, there are none to give.

Therefore, while India remains committed to the convening of SSOD IV on the basis of a consensus on its objectives and agenda, we believe it essential that the objectives of SSOD IV must reaffirm the principles and priorities of SSOD I, preserving what we have while attempting to build upon it in the future. However, those who wish to retain nuclear weapons as a currency of power, no matter how this is rationalized, have insisted throughout our negotiations that they will accept no language that could even implicitly bring this critical and central issue to the table at an SSOD. The international community should not accept this; India will not. Through intransigence masked in apparent reasonableness — the constructive ambiguity of a camouflaged silo — they have destroyed the process that we began in 1994. We are truly sorry that it has come to this.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to express my gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, for your effective chairmanship, which has brought this session of the Commission to a successful end. Your leadership has made a significant contribution to the respectful and cooperative atmosphere that prevailed throughout our deliberations at this year's session of the Disarmament Commission. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his support of the work of the Commission. My sincere appreciation also goes to all members of the Secretariat for their help.

We have successfully completed the consideration of two very important agenda items of the Disarmament Commission. The adoption of the guidelines and recommendations for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned and the guidelines for conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace, prove once again the efficiency of the Disarmament Commission as the universal deliberative body of the General Assembly. It is expected that, from next year, the revitalized Disarmament Commission will be more efficient and successful in carrying out its mandate.

Due to the exemplary chairmanship of Mr. Michael Hoey of Ireland, Working Group III was able to provide consensus guidelines on conventional arms. However, this success was also achieved due to the cooperation of all delegations, in particular countries that rely on these weapons for their security. My delegation hopes that the spirit of cooperation shown on this issue will be carried over into our efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament, which we hope we will consider next year.

I am so delighted that, due to the cooperation of all members of the Disarmament Commission, the consensus guidelines and recommendations on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones have been finalized under the chairmanship of the Ambassador of Ecuador. I am sure that this consensus document can make a significant contribution to the strengthening of existing zones and to the establishment of new zones free of nuclear weapons — particularly in the Middle East, to which the consensus guidelines have made a clear reference.

In conclusion, in spite of the serious efforts made by Ambassador Effendi of Indonesia as Chairman of Working Group II, it is regrettable that we could not reach consensus on the agenda and objectives of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). However, we hope that we will be able to find a solution to this problem during this year's session of the First Committee.

Ms. Moules (Australia): Mr. Chairman, the delegation of Australia would like to join other delegations in congratulating you and the Chairmen of the three Working Groups on your efforts in guiding the work of this year's session of the Disarmament Commission. For the first time in several years, the Commission has produced concrete results of which we can all be proud. The achievement of agreed principles and guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament and on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is testament to and a timely reminder of what the Commission is capable of producing when the political will exists. Sadly, the failure of the Commission to deliver results on its third agenda item shows that the value of the Commission is not without its limitations at times.

The results of the work of Working Group III, on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, under the inspiring chairmanship of Mr. Michael Hoey of Ireland, constitute a ground-breaking and timely achievement. The agreed guidelines are recognized as being the result of compromises on all sides, and are a welcome addition to the growing body of reference material for addressing the problems of small arms and light weapons. Australia is confident that the guidelines

will make a valuable contribution to the building of international norms for conventional arms control, and to the process of disarmament in post-conflict situations in particular. We hope the guidelines will become, through reference and use, a valuable tool for countries dealing with the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons.

I would like on behalf of the Australian delegation to pay special tribute to the efforts of the Chairman of Working Group III, Mr. Hoey. His unwavering commitment to the overall purpose of the Working Group, combined with his sincere and transparent handling of the interests of all delegations, were crucial elements behind the agreement reached.

The results of the work of Working Group I, on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, are also very welcome, and are due in no small part to the perseverance and skill of the Working Group's Chairman, Ambassador Izquierdo of Ecuador, and to your own efforts, Sir, as Chairman of the Commission. The Working Group succeeded in producing an outcome which, importantly in the view of my delegation, is in keeping with the 1995 decision of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on principles and objectives, which reaffirmed that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned enhances global and regional peace and security. Identifying generally applicable guidelines in an area in which regional circumstances and views differ considerably was a difficult and challenging task, and we are encouraged that the Commission was able to rise to this challenge. The experience of this Working Group highlights the importance of the Commission's being ambitious, but at the same time realistic, about what it can and cannot resolve in this deliberative forum, and of setting its goals under each new agenda item accordingly.

We regret that a similar outcome was not possible in Working Group II, on a fourth special session on disarmament. The lack of results in that Working Group is as disappointing as it is difficult for the Commission as a whole to justify. It is particularly unfortunate that, even after recognition by the General Assembly last year that this issue was important enough to warrant an exceptional fourth term at the Commission, and despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of delegations had made clear that they could accept, as a compromise, the Chairman's working paper and subsequent proposals, we were unable to reach final agreement.

It is ironic that the arguments which prevented an agenda for a fourth special session being agreed were the very arguments which should, in fact, have been preserved for the special session itself. As my delegation remarked during the course of the Working Group's deliberations, no one could seriously doubt that a special session would give due attention to the full range of issues which delegations would wish to raise. Neither the agenda for the special session nor rigid adherence to the final product of the first special session on disarmament could have prevented this reality occurring had the special session been allowed to take place. On the vexed question of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, my delegation would only note that, while a valuable and historic document, it is undeniably a product of its time. It does the cause of global arms control and disarmament no service to invest this 21-year-old document with the status of immutable holy writ.

We commend the strenuous efforts of Ambassador Effendi of Indonesia, as Chairman of the Working Group, to broker agreement on the objectives and agenda for a fourth special session. Ambassador Effendi worked hard under difficult circumstances to identify the right balance for an agenda and objectives which would not prejudice the precise issues that might be raised at the special session, or the precise outcomes that might be achieved. In the view of my delegation, Ambassador Effendi succeeded in getting that balance right and, notwithstanding the ultimate outcome of the work of the Working Group, we commend him for this.

Before concluding, my delegation would like to reiterate the importance Australia attaches to building on the constructive progress on the reform of the Commission which was achieved at last year's session. We believe that there is more that could be done to streamline our work here, particularly given the decision last year to reduce the number of agenda items from three to two. As a long-term goal we continue to favour having a two-week session of the Disarmament Commission at which two substantive agenda items are considered. Overall, we believe we should be active and progressive in looking for ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Commission in order to maximize its contribution to international norm-building in the field of arms control and disarmament.

The Australian delegation reiterates its sincere appreciation, Sir, for the efforts you, the Working Group Chairmen and the rest of the Bureau have made throughout this year's session. We would like also to thank the Secretariat, including the conference officers, interpreters and translators, for their assistance.

Mr. Richier (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom, the United States and France. I wish simply to say that the adoption of the document on nuclear-weapon-free zones does not in any way change the position of our three countries on the item entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", as stated in the First Committee during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly.

Ms. Laker (Canada): At this closing meeting of the 1999 session of the Disarmament Commission, I would like to offer Canada's perspective on the work of this session and on the achievements of the Commission.

In our opening statement, we reaffirmed Canada's belief that the value of the Commission lay not only in increasing awareness of issues but also in identifying principles and offering guidelines to achieve common goals in the areas of disarmament and international security. That approaches to these issues can now be addressed in a manner that creates a synergy between States and established bodies working together for international, national, regional and subregional solutions is proof that the work of the Commission has had a positive impact on promoting the purposes of the United Nations: universal peace, security and cooperation. This also bodes well for the future work of the Disarmament Commission.

Deliberations in the three Working Groups have been for the most part constructive and productive, taking into account difficult and complex issues and the inevitable divergent views of States.

The Commission has now completed its current programme of work. While we are disappointed that we were unable to reach consensus within the Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, we would like to pay tribute to the tireless efforts of the Chairman. Canada was prepared to join in a consensus on the packages that he proposed. Even recognizing that they did not perfectly reflect our national views, we were convinced that they offered the international community a vital framework upon which we could begin to consider new perspectives, guided by fundamental principles, in order to strengthen and promote disarmament and international security as we entered a new and challenging millennium. We would also like to acknowledge the flexibility and cooperation demonstrated by the members of the Working Group, who brought us so close to a successful outcome.

We further congratulate the Chairman of the Working Group on the "establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned", and the members of the Commission, for the spirit of compromise that prevailed throughout our deliberations. Here again, we hope that the work accomplished in this forum can be drawn upon by all States searching for tools to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as well as regional security. We would like to reiterate that the comprehensive support of the five nuclear-weapon States for those zones is essential, and we urge unconditional action by them to this end.

We would also like to congratulate the Chairman of Working Group III, whose contribution was instrumental in allowing the Commission to agree by consensus on "Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N". This document will provide clear and adaptable guidance to those States seeking solutions and assistance — guidelines — that will support efforts to consolidate peace, foster cooperation and entrench disarmament and confidence-building measures. While primarily applicable for the consolidation of peace in post-conflict situations, the principles and measures contained in this document also demonstrate just how urgently the international community is, in fact, rethinking the conduct of its affairs in a world where the security of all Member States depends on the promotion of human, regional and international security.

Finally, Canada would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Bureau and of the Secretariat of the Organization and their support during the 1999 session of the Disarmament Commission. We would also like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your personal efforts and careful guidance throughout these proceedings.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to join other delegations in expressing to you, Mr. Chairman, and to other members of the Bureau our delegation's gratitude for the manner in which you guided our work during this session. Your participation and

contributions were a valuable and useful input in the outcome of our work.

As we prepare to conclude the work of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission for 1999, I should like briefly to outline some of my delegation's impressions of this session.

First, my delegation is pleased to see that our Commission was able successfully to complete its consideration of the item on the "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned". The document that our Commission has adopted on this item, thanks to the efforts deployed by Ambassador Izquierdo of Ecuador and by you yourself, Mr. Chairman, represents a significant contribution and a very valuable achievement for the international community, because it is, I believe, the first consensus document on this important and sensitive matter. It will therefore be extremely useful to those States wishing to establish such zones, in particular in the Middle East. We are pleased also to see the five nuclear-weapon States join in the consensus on a document of such importance.

With regard to the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, I should like, despite the fact that no agreement was reached, to pay tribute to the spirit that prevailed during the exchange of views. The Chairman of that Group, Ambassador Arizal Effendi of Indonesia — and here I should like to pay tribute to him personally and to his country for having agreed to chair that Group despite the difficulties linked to that sensitive issue — presented a draft document that, in the view of my delegation, forms a valid basis for consensus.

Regrettably, that did not turn out to be the case, despite more than four years of intensive consultations and negotiations. The Group's failure to reach agreement on that item is not the responsibility of the Chairman alone. The failure is ours, and we all share in it. My delegation hopes that the lack of agreement on this item at the level of the Disarmament Commission will not have a negative impact on the principle of the convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which is more timely than ever despite our differences of opinion and our disagreements.

With respect to the Working Group on "Guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N", my delegation would like to express its satisfaction at the adoption of a balanced document that probably will be of help to countries, especially those that are suffering, or have suffered, from problems relating to post-conflict peace-building.

I would like here to pay tribute to the role played by Mr. Michael Hoey of Ireland, the Chairman of that Working Group, whose patience and persistence greatly facilitated our deliberations and the adoption of a document that was far from agreed upon. The insertion into that document of a section containing clear and specific principles allowed many delegations to join in the consensus. In this respect, the early nomination of a Chairman and the start of consultations before the Committee's work began played a very useful role in the success outcome of the Group's work, despite the complexity of the delicate question under consideration.

I cannot conclude without reiterating my country's commitment to the Disarmament Commission and its future. The Commission, which is being called upon to play an increasingly important role in the area of disarmament, has just reconfirmed this role in an outstanding manner through the adoption of a document on the agenda items before it.

Despite the absence of consensus on agenda item 3, there are a variety of topics that, if considered wisely and judiciously, can promote a better understanding of such sensitive and crucial issues as those relating to the security of humankind, especially since the rationalization of our work will greatly facilitate the Commission's smooth functioning.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for disarmament, and Mr. Petrovsky for their continued presence and valuable advice throughout the duration of the Commission's work.

Mr. Ahmed (Bangladesh): Mr. Chairman, you have steered the work of our Commission to a successful conclusion, and for that allow me to express my delegation's heartiest congratulations.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation go also to the Chairmen of the three Working Groups for their hard work and sincere commitment. Here I must also put on record our wholehearted thanks and admiration for Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala and his

colleagues from the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the useful support they have extended to the work of the Commission.

This year, by and large, we have concluded a successful session of the Disarmament Commission. This has been possible due essentially to the display of a spirit of cooperation by all delegations, coupled with the able and dexterous leadership and support received from the Bureau.

Before I conclude my short intervention, let me take this opportunity to say a few words on the medium-term plan for disarmament which was introduced by the Under-Secretary-General on 23 April and was considered by the Committee of the Whole yesterday. My delegation would like to put on record its sincere appreciation for the initiative taken by the Under-Secretary-General in presenting the medium-term plan.

In this connection, let me say that we look at the plan positively. This stems from the high priority which my delegation attaches to the activities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. We have noted the objectives of the plan and have forwarded it to our capital for careful study. Here, I would like to express my delegation's agreement with the views stated by several delegations that the Disarmament Commission was not, perhaps, the appropriate forum to discuss the matter. We could, perhaps, discuss it in greater detail in the First Committee.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the importance my delegation attaches to the work of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I should like, on behalf of the delegation of Cuba, to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on the work you have done as Chairman of the Commission. Of course, this comes as no surprise to us, as we are familiar with your great experience and ability. I should also like to extend our thanks to the other members of the Bureau and to congratulate the Chairmen of the three Working Groups, Ambassador Izquierdo, Ambassador Effendi and Mr. Michael Hoey, on the admirable way in which they fulfilled their difficult responsibilities.

Once again, we have clearly demonstrated the invaluable importance of the Disarmament Commission as a specialized deliberative body in which all Member States have the opportunity to participate. We have been able to adopt very important working documents on issues that concern and involve many of our Governments. Fortunately, those who have directly or indirectly promoted the elimination of the Disarmament Commission, considering it an ineffective body, will now have fewer arguments.

Small delegations have not found it easy to become involved in the intense dynamics of the Commission this year. The fact that meetings almost always took place in parallel, in addition to the numerous informal consultations, meant that on occasion many small delegations found it impossible to attend fully to all of their work. We hope that, as part of the rationalization measures to be applied to the work of the Commission beginning next year, the holding of meetings in parallel will become the exception rather than the rule.

One positive advance this year was the early appointment of the Chairmen of the Working Groups so that, to a greater or lesser extent, they were able to start informal consultations during the inter-sessional period. My delegation believes that this procedure should become standard practice of the Disarmament Commission, thereby allowing us to establish favourable conditions for the further development of our work.

The process that finally allowed us to adopt, in the last few days of our work, the document on nuclear-weapon-free zones was a long and complex one. In the spirit of compromise, many delegations had to overlook their concerns about the issue, thereby enabling us to achieve results. We now have general guidelines that will be fundamental for the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones on the earth, taking into account, of course, the particular nature of each region.

With regard to Working Group II, Cuba deeply regrets that after four years of intensive work we were not able to reach a consensus. For the Non-Aligned Movement, the holding of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is a very important objective, as reflected in the resolutions on this issue that the Non-Aligned Movement has presented in recent years. Despite having devoted an additional year to this issue, the determining factor was once again the failure of political will shown by some countries from the very first efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement to promote that idea. Without going into details, I should simply like to register my delegation's concern with regard to the double standard still used by some, whereby they try to deny the applicability of the Final Declaration of 1978 and fiercely promote the perpetuation of a military alliance — the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization — that was created to operate a cold war that has now ended.

Working Group III, on conventional arms control/limitation, undoubtedly dealt with a matter of great political sensitivity for States. The complexities of the issue did not prevent a very substantive document from being adopted, thanks to the joint efforts and flexibility of all delegations. Cuba believes that overall the text maintains a very delicate balance that cannot admit a partial or selective reading. No section of that document should receive more attention than another, because they all complement one another. Finally, I must take this opportunity to mention the excellent work done by Mr. Michael Hoey in chairing that Working Group, a factor that contributed in large part to the successful results of the Working Group.

Mr. Itzhaki (Israel): On behalf of the Israeli delegation, I would first like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the Chairmen of the three Working Groups, on your important role in conducting our deliberations. Israel views favourably the attempt to reach a consensus on the issues before us. We note that this takes special effort, requiring the sensitive incorporation of the different needs, vulnerabilities and interpretations that each nation brings to the issues.

Yet consensus is achievable because, at the core, we share some important principles. They therefore paved the way for achieving such consensus on two of the three issues of our discussions. For its part, Israel supports the eventual establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We see this as one of the most beneficial outgrowths of agreements between States, once they recognize one another and abolish any state of war and threat between them. We view with hope the possibility of beginning to take these steps. Thus, we have strong solidarity with the core principles of the Chairman's paper. In particular, the paper takes note of the fact that these arrangements depend on regional cooperation and on initiatives taken directly between States in their own region. Given the primacy Israel attaches to beginning such arrangements through regional confidence-building, Israel is particularly in sync with this emphasis.

As one of the few nations that remain mortally threatened by surrounding neighbours, a few of which back up their threats with a growing arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, Israel eagerly supports taking cooperative steps with other States in the region. Thus we might forge a new relationship, based at least on the foundation of trust and mutual recognition, so that we can begin to establish a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

That is why Israel so highly regards opportunities, when they exist, to reach consensus on these matters with other States. We also view the consensus and cooperation pursued here as a reflection of the confidence-building that will be necessary in reality. Israel was, however, concerned that the spirit of cooperation that could have accompanied this paper could be tarnished by the insertion of references that pinpoint the Middle East, in an openly political attempt to single out one region or country. Needless to say, blatantly politicized and specific initiatives, advanced here and in other forums without regard to their relevance or context, serve only to detract from the spirit of cooperation we seek to build here.

It is in the interest of this cooperative spirit that we joined the consensus. It is our hope that the efforts undertaken by some nations here to rise above differences and discord in the service of universal principles will lead to progress in reality. In particular, we hope nations can live up to the minimum of recognizing each other's right to exist in peace and security so we can begin to translate the values advanced here into facts on the ground. I take this opportunity, once again, to thank you personally, Mr. Chairman, for the manner in which you have conducted these deliberations.

Mr. Khan (Pakistan): Abiding by your request, Mr. Chairman, I shall make a very brief statement.

We greatly admire and appreciate the efforts that you made, Sir, during the last three weeks in successfully concluding the work of the Commission. Our profound gratitude also goes to the Chairmen of the three Working Groups, who also made untiring efforts to achieve consensus in their respective Working Groups.

Our delegation is indeed pleased that the Working Groups on conventional arms and nuclear-weapon-free zones have concluded their work successfully. Nevertheless, our happiness is somewhat tempered by the lack of consensus in Working Group II, on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), even after four long years of deliberations.

As we stressed in our statement during the plenary, Pakistan attaches great importance to the early convening of SSOD IV. It was in this spirit that our delegation

participated in the deliberations. We were genuinely optimistic about a consensus on SSOD IV, considering that the item was in its fourth and last year. However, all our hopes proved in vain.

It is indeed a matter of concern that, while some delegations did express the interest of their respective countries in SSOD IV, they would not show the corresponding flexibility, which is a fundamental requirement for reaching any compromise. As far as Pakistan is concerned, we believe that the principles and priorities laid down by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament are important and should be carried forward. But at the same time we are not oblivious to the new realities of the post-cold-war period.

Finally, let me once again thank you, Sir, the Bureau and the Secretariat for the excellent job done.

Mr. Reznikov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Allow me to take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your efforts to instil a cooperative and constructive spirit in our work. We were witness to your masterful talents when you resolved highly complicated matters in order to bring delegations to compromise and consensus. I also would like to thank the Chairmen of the three Working Groups — the Ambassador of Ecuador, the Ambassador of Indonesia and Mr. Hoey — for the leadership they showed, which enabled the Groups to successfully complete their work. I would also like to express our gratitude to the resolute members of the Bureau of the Disarmament Commission, whose patience and persistence helped us resolve difficult problems. We are especially grateful to our colleagues in the Secretariat, whose efforts, efficiency and patience allowed us to achieve tangible results. We are also thankful for all the delegations that showed flexibility and respect for the views of other delegations.

It was not our intention initially to speak during the plenary of this meeting, because we thought we had set forth our position clearly and comprehensively enough during the general debate. However, the patently politicized statement made by the representative of Poland on behalf of a number of countries of the region — criticizing the Belorusian delegation's effort to reflect in the Working Group I document the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free space in Central Europe — has compelled us to take the floor now.

The main thrust of that representative's statement was that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free space in the centre of the European continent did not respond to the interests of the countries of the region, that at present it did not enjoy universal support and that it did not correspond to their sovereign decision to take advantage of the new European security structure.

We need to make it clear that that statement by the representative of Poland was made on behalf of 12 States of the Central and Eastern European region, of which three have become new members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and have participated in NATO's military aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, aggression that was launched in circumvention of the Security Council. The other nine States are listed in NATO's revised strategic concept as viable candidates for that military bloc. By the way, that concept includes the right to use the military might of the North Atlantic Alliance outside the boundaries of its geographical area of responsibility. In this context, it is clearly appropriate to talk about the "political purposes" of those States, and not of Belarus.

It is axiomatic that it is impossible to achieve peace, security and the realization of democratic objectives by using or threatening to use force. Only through partnership, cooperation and confidence-building in accordance with generally accepted standards of international law is it possible to settle disputes and conflicts peacefully. Belarus has actively supported these provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and Belarus feels that the international community cannot be allowed to ignore the bitter experience of the two World Wars, which began in the European region.

In its practical actions along these lines, Belarus has always striven to strengthen mutual understanding and trust in Europe. As a result, and especially in the light of the tragic events in the Balkans, further efforts in the sphere of establishing and expanding the limits of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including on the European continent, could become part of an important instrument for building security and trust in the subregional and regional contexts.

At this session, the Disarmament Commission has prepared two very important documents oriented to today's realities and our hopes for the future. In our opinion, the document on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned is the result of a compromise among delegations. We understand that the document does not fully accord with

what we should have liked to see it reflect, but the Belarusian delegation has agreed to it because we are firmly convinced that it is very important and necessary to all States Members of the United Nations. The guiding principles it contains lay down a good basis for the practical implementation of those values and tasks which the international community has defined as priorities.

We hope that, at future sessions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, we shall also be able to discuss problems that are no less important and timely in the area of disarmament and international security.

Ms. Menendez (Spain): We wish to associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Germany on behalf of the European Union and with those made by all previous speakers who have congratulated you, Sir, the Bureau and the Chairmen of the Working Groups for the way in which they have conducted the work of this Commission.

We wish here to make certain points about the document on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Spain firmly supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned and in the light of the specific characteristics of each region, because we believe that they strengthen regional and international peace and security. Specifically, Spain supports the objectives of the Treaty of Pelindaba Treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, as the authorities of my country have frequently reiterated, particularly when the Treaty was opened for signature on 11 April 1996 in the capital of Egypt.

In this sense, we welcome the fact that a consensus has been reached in the Working Group and that the reference document has been concluded, for which we express our gratitude for the roles played by Ambassador Izquierdo of Ecuador and by you, Sir, in negotiations that were certainly not easy. Like other delegations, mine is not perfectly satisfied with the language in certain paragraphs of the document. Nevertheless, we feel that we demonstrated flexibility in negotiation and we have therefore joined the consensus on that document.

We wish to stress some of the document's positive aspects that we deem important, particularly the fact that it enshrines the principle of respect for the specific and particular conditions of each zone, its geographical delimitation and other factors to be taken into account for its establishment, including the process of necessary consultations with interested States and questions relating to States outside the region with part of their territory within nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Lastly, my delegation would like to reiterate, in connection with Protocol III to the Treaty of Pelindaba, that Spain reserves the right to accede, since the Treaty purportedly applies to a part of Spanish territory, which is not admissible given the fact that Spain did not play a full part in drafting it. Nevertheless, we wish to remind members that, as a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and as a non-nuclear-weapon State, Spain maintains certain standards in the sphere of denuclearization, strengthened politically and legally by the decision of the Spanish Parliament on this subject and by the conditions of my country's entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which have also been confirmed in practice by the safeguard regimes to which all Spanish territory is subject. These standards, as I have said, go beyond the obligations stipulated in the Pelindaba Treaty.

Mr. Li Changhe (China): The 1999 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission is coming to a close. This session has achieved important results under your able leadership, Sir, and thanks to the common efforts of all delegations. The Chinese delegation expresses its appreciation and thanks to you and to the Bureau for your excellent work. We also wish to thank the members of the Secretariat, the conference officers and interpreters for their efficient work and assistance.

We also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his close attention to the meetings of the Commission and for his counsel.

After three weeks of hard work, a conclusive document has at last been finalized on the agenda item on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. This paper encapsulates the experience and contributions of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and formulates a series of guidelines for the future establishment of such zones. The Chinese delegation wishes sincerely to thank to Mr. Emilio Izquierdo, Chairman of the Working Group on this subject, for his efforts. We also wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to delegations for the spirit in which they set aside their differences and sought common ground in cooperation and consensus.

During the deliberations on this subject, the relationship between the existing security mechanism and nuclear-weapon-free zones was one of the important issues. The Chinese delegation has joined the consensus concerning this paragraph, and we would like to reiterate here that nuclear-weapon-free zones should be zones genuinely free of nuclear weapons and that relevant regional and international agreements should in no way jeopardize the non-nuclear status of those zones. States parties to nuclear-weapon-free zones must not use any pretexts, including military alliances, for not exercising or honouring their obligations under the relevant treaty.

In addition, after numerous consultations a common understanding has been reached concerning the definition of the boundaries of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Past experience and lessons have shown us that this is an important issue. It has a direct bearing on the successful establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and on whether they can enjoy the support of the countries concerned. Therefore, countries that are contemplating the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones should engage in full consultations with the countries outside the zone in defining boundaries, especially with those countries that are signatories to the relevant protocol. It is of great relevance and importance to do so, especially when territories under dispute are involved.

I would like to reiterate that China has always supported and will always support the efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones made by the countries of the Middle East, Central Asia and other countries that wish to do so. We also support the proposal of Mongolia on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free status.

In connection with the item on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), the Chinese delegation would like to express its sincere appreciation to Ambassador Effendi of Indonesia for his tireless efforts, exemplary diplomatic skill and patience. However, because of the fundamental disagreement on the objectives of SSOD IV, after four years of deliberations the Disarmament Commission has failed to reach the expected agreement on those objectives. This can only be described as regrettable. However, the efforts of the Disarmament Commission during the last four years have not been in vain. Through those efforts we have deepened our understanding and are aware of each other's positions, proposals and concerns, which will help us seek more common understanding and narrow our differences.

The result of the deliberations during the last four years has shown that great and deep differences exist concerning objectives and priorities in the area of international disarmament. This only shows that the road to international disarmament is long and arduous and calls for the international community to redouble its efforts in this regard.

After three years of strenuous efforts, the Commission has finally come up with guidelines on disarmament and arms control aimed at consolidating peace in post-conflict areas. These very comprehensive guidelines resulted from the common efforts of all delegations. They reflect the common wish of the various countries to eliminate the negative impact of war and to consolidate peace in post-conflict regions. At the same time, the relatively successful conclusion of the mandate of Working Group III is closely associated with the personal efforts of Mr. Michael Hoey of Ireland, the Chairman of the Working Group. We would like to extend our congratulations to him and our appreciation for his hard work and accomplishments.

During the formulation of these guidelines, it was agreed among the various countries that emphasis should be placed on the consolidation of peace in post-conflict areas. In addition, regions of the world differ in nature, and the experiences of a single area may not be applicable to other regions. Flexibility is therefore called for in this regard. Meanwhile, while rebuilding and maintaining peace in post-conflict areas, it is necessary to abide by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is also necessary to ensure that the implementation of various measures receives the approval of the countries concerned. A country should not see its sovereignty diminished because of a desperate need for post-conflict foreign assistance.

The Chinese delegation would like to reiterate here that in order to solve the problem of the illegal transfer of arms, especially small arms, and to eliminate its negative influence in post-conflict areas, countries should undertake various measures, including legislative ones, to control the use, possession and transfer of arms. We are pleased to note that these important elements have been reflected in the guidelines.

Before closing, I would like to say that the results of this session show that, with the support of the international community, this mechanism has a role to play. China hopes that the Commission will continue to

play its positive role and to make its contribution to promote the international disarmament process.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): In my national capacity, I wish to express my delegation's satisfaction with the positive outcomes of this session of the Disarmament Commission, particularly on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and on guidelines on conventional arms control and limitation measures. Our deliberations in the three Working Groups underline the importance of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body on all disarmament matters. The successful conclusion of our work in Working Groups I and III, although at times very difficult to achieve, is evidence of the political commitment of all delegations to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and guidelines on conventional arms control and limitation.

However, at this juncture I wish to stress that the voluntary and non-binding principles and guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as presented in the report of the Commission can be regarded only as a non-exhaustive list of generally accepted observations in the current stage of the development of these zones and that they are based on current practices and available experiences. These principles should not be used or interpreted to prevent in any way the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which should be completely free of nuclear weapons on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

I wish, however, to express South Africa's deep regret over the fact that the Commission could not reach consensus on the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), as mandated by the General Assembly. We remain convinced that such a special session would have offered an opportunity to review from a perspective more in tune with the current international situation the most critical aspects of the process of disarmament and to mobilize the international community and public opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

I wish, however, to express our deep appreciation to Ambassador Effendi of Indonesia for his unfailing efforts, right to the very end, to find agreement on this important matter. I wish too to assure him that the failure to reach agreement on the convening of a fourth special session on disarmament cannot and will not be blamed on him.

In the same vein, I wish to thank the Chairmen of Working Groups I and III, Ambassadors Emilio Izquierdo and Michael Hoey respectively, for their committed efforts in leading us towards the successful conclusion of those two agenda items.

Permit me also, Mr. Chairman, to thank you personally for presiding over our deliberations during this session. Your strong leadership and, particularly, your personal involvement in the discussions and negotiations during this session, as well as your ability to pull the right genie out of the bottle, were of immense importance for the successful conclusion of our work. We wish also to thank the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur for a job well done.

Finally, I should like to thank Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and the other members of the Secretariat for the outstanding advice and service provided to all delegations during this session.

Mr. Chaouachi (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): As the current session of the Disarmament Commission comes to a close, I wish to take this opportunity on behalf of the Arab Group to thank all who have contributed to our work and to its successful outcome. I thank in particular the Chairmen of the three Working Groups, Ambassador Izquierdo of Ecuador, Ambassador Effendi of Indonesia and Ambassador Hoey of Ireland, for their creative efforts to lead the work of their Groups to success.

Our thanks go also to you, Mr. Chairman, for your personal participation, which enabled us to overcome a number of the difficulties we encountered.

We welcome the two important documents adopted at this session, and regret that it proved impossible to adopt the third document, relating to a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, for his advice and his presence throughout the session. We also thank the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, as well as the interpreters and other members of the conference servicing staff.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the Chairmen of the three Working Groups for your efforts and dedication

in guiding our deliberations on the important agenda items that were before us.

As shown in the report we have just adopted, this session of the Disarmament Commission achieved mixed results. While we welcome the success in reaching consensus on the work of Working Group I and Working Group III, we regret that Working Group II was not able to reach consensus on the important issue of the objectives and agenda of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, despite tireless efforts by the Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador Effendi, and by you yourself, Sir, to bridge the gaps among the divergent positions of delegations. As members will recall, an overwhelming majority of delegations, including my own, persistently supported you and the Chairman of the Working Group in the effort to reach consensus on the compromise solution both of you initiated. It is unfortunate and regrettable that we could not achieve our goal owing, as the Chairman of the Group indicated, to intransigence and to an apparent lack of political will on the part of some delegations.

It remains our strong belief that the time has come to convene a fourth special session on disarmament as early as possible, especially given the tremendous changes that have occurred in the international situation and the security environment since the previous special sessions. Moreover, it is also our strong view that if and when a fourth special session is convened it should be a forum not only for reviewing the past but also for addressing the future, effectively working out what should be done to deal with the important challenges and issues we face now and will be facing in the future in the field of disarmament. We therefore believe that the objectives of a fourth special session should not be limited to reaffirming what we achieved at the first special session devoted to disarmament, but should include the important task of charting a future course of action and establishing the necessary principles and priorities, as appropriate.

Although the failure to reach consensus at this session is regrettable, we should not be overly pessimistic. In our view, what we have done for the past three weeks has further helped to build a foundation for eventually reaching consensus. In that regard, we hope that the process and efforts for consensus-building on the objectives and agenda can be continued; perhaps we will be able to seize the opportunity of the forthcoming session of the General Assembly so that long overdue consensus may finally be achieved to bring about the convening of a fourth special session on disarmament.

Finally, on the work of Working Group I, on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, we welcome the document we have adopted today. As we have stressed on several occasions in plenary meetings of the Commission, in the Working Group and in informal consultations, we attach great importance to the establishment and functioning of nuclear-weapon-free zones that contribute to the strengthening of the global non-proliferation regime and global and regional peace and security. Throughout these meetings we also emphasized a number of fundamental principles: that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned should fully take into account the specific security circumstances of that particular region, and that the inherent right of States to individual or collective self-defence, as enshrined in the provisions of the United Nations Charter, should not be affected by the establishment of such zones.

This right of the State to individual or collective self-defence is a sovereign right recognized not only by the United Nations Charter but also by customary international law and practice. Therefore any rights and obligations of those States under international, regional or bilateral security agreements or arrangements freely entered into by the States in the exercise of this sovereign right should not be subjugated to the obligations under the arrangement of such as establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

In this regard, my delegation would like to underline that our joining consensus on the document we have adopted is without prejudice to the position which I have just stated. In particular, our joining consensus on the language of paragraph 32, which is the product of intensive negotiation and compromise, is based on the understanding that the words "the rights", in the eighth line of that paragraph, are being interpreted to mean the inherent right to individual or collective self-defence, as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations.

To conclude, we wish to join other speakers in expressing our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat — the interpreters, translators and conference officers — for their valuable cooperation and assistance.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): Like others, I would like to express the appreciation of my delegation to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the three able Chairmen of the Working Groups for your dedication and for your valuable efforts towards achieving this session's goals and

towards presenting to the next session of the General Assembly a number of guidelines and recommendations for its consideration and approval.

As a member of the Bureau, my delegation had the honour and privilege of working with all present and of witnessing the enormous efforts made during the course of the session, including this morning, in this very conference room. Your personal leadership and involvement, Mr. Chairman, have inspired us all and contributed to the narrowing of differences and to the finding of appropriate solutions to some sensitive and delicate issues.

It is gratifying to note that the Commission has been able to adopt the guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, the practical importance of which cannot be overemphasized. This demonstrates that given goodwill, advance preparation and hard work, the Commission is able to contribute in a practical manner to the cause of arms control/limitation and disarmament.

Turning to the work of the Commission on preparing the guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, my delegation would like to express its satisfaction at the adoption today, as a result of intense negotiations, of a set of guidelines that will be helpful in facilitating the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in future. This, we consider, would be another concrete, practical contribution by the Commission, and in fact by the United Nations, to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

While on this subject, my delegation would like to express its deep appreciation to the delegations of South Africa, Myanmar, Viet Nam, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, Mexico, Indonesia, Singapore, Germany, Egypt, the Ukraine and many others for their support for Mongolia's efforts to establish its nuclear-weapon-free status, as reflected in General Assembly resolution 53/77 D. It is also gratifying to note that when addressing this question, all the nuclear-weapon States reiterated their full support for that resolution as well as their resolve to work together with Mongolia towards its realization.

I would like also to underline my delegation's appreciation to China for its firm, clear support, expressed once again just now at this plenary. My country looks forward to working closely with these States and all other Members of the United Nations, as specifically pointed out in the resolution, in fully implementing its provisions.

Like other delegations, we regret that the negotiations on the question of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) did not yield positive results. This demonstrates that genuine political will on the part of all is needed to come to an agreement on this vital issue. We had hoped that the realization of the far-reaching importance of holding such a special session for all States without exception, and in fact for the international community as a whole, would have allowed States to look beyond their own immediate interests, however important these may be. We express the hope that the General Assembly will continue dealing with this issue and be able to overcome this impasse.

Mr. Orlov (Russian Federation) *(spoke in Russian)*: The Russian delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the Chairman of this session of the Disarmament Commission and also to the Chairmen of all of the Working Groups for their outstanding work.

This session's work took place at a very critical moment in the history of world events. The United Nations today is truly being tested. A number of Member States are crudely trampling upon the principles of the Charter of the United Nations — primarily the principle that holds that the use of force to support or achieve international peace and security is possible and legitimate only in accordance with United Nations Security Council decisions.

The Russian delegation deems totally unacceptable the fact that some States at times act according to certain principles, which they feel are more important, while failing to observe other basic principles of civilized international relations that, in their view, are not so important at that stage. This is an exceptionally dangerous policy that could jeopardize the entire system of international relations, whose central element is the Charter of the United Nations, which is supposed to be a guarantee of stability throughout the world. Such actions furthermore may cause extremely dangerous and irreversible damage to the disarmament process.

In this connection, we believe that it is exceptionally important that in such an unprecedented situation the work of the Commission should end on a positive note through the adoption by consensus of two important documents.

Allow me once again, Mr. Chairman, to express to you and to your colleagues our deep gratitude for your efforts.

Mr. Tomaszewski (Poland): I wholeheartedly share the gratitude expressed by other delegations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the three Chairmen of the Working Groups, for your tireless efforts to arrive at the best possible results. My delegation is also pleased to see both Jayantha Dhanapala and Vladimir Petrovsky, whom we congratulate and thank for the invaluable support, guidance and expertise that they are giving to the United Nations disarmament machinery so that it works as effectively as possible.

Poland attaches great importance to nuclear-weapon-free zones, but at the same time it looks at them as but one of the possible options for guaranteeing the security interests of a country. In that context, Poland is not looking at them as the only solution. Therefore, Poland associates itself fully with the comments made with regard to paragraph 32 of the document of Working Group I, on nuclear-weapon-free zones, which concerns regional security arrangements.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the representative of Belarus for the fact that he reminded the Commission of the statement made by Poland on 23 April on behalf of 12 countries of the region of Central and Eastern Europe. I apologize for coming late into the room; I was outside during the meeting of the Committee of the Whole, waiting for the plenary meeting to begin. When I arrived, the Commission had already agreed on its report, which does not mention that statement made by the Polish delegation on behalf of 12 countries, and I see no other solution but to reiterate our position. The statement is not mentioned in the report, and I would very much like to request you, Mr. Chairman, to ensure that it is reflected in the documents of the session.

On that day, I was speaking on behalf or Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and my own country, Poland. We have expressed on various occasions our favourable attitude towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as complementary instruments to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). At the same time, however, we consider that such zones must not interfere with existing or revolving security arrangements to the detriment of regional or international security. Such zones should not adversely affect the inalienable rights to individual or collective self-defence guaranteed by the United Nations Charter. Against that background, we did not, and still do not, consider the Belarus proposal to be in line with our sovereign resolve to contribute to and benefit from the new European security architecture.

Furthermore, the Belarus proposal is being advanced in international forums, first, in disregard of the wishes of the countries of the region concerned and, secondly, against the basic and universally agreed principle that nuclear-weapon-free zones should be based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. That is definitely not the case with our region.

If it is possible to correct the report of the Disarmament Commission in that respect at this late stage, I would be very grateful. There is another omission: Germany spoke on behalf not only of the European Union, but also of the associated countries of the European Union. That is not reflected in the report. I am amazed by the fact that Ukraine, which, like Poland, spoke on 23 April, is mentioned as having spoken on 12 April, while Poland, together with the other 11 countries, has been left out.

That is all I wanted to say; I am sorry to have taken the floor at this late stage in our deliberations.

The Chairman: The Secretariat will take care to reflect the fact that Poland was among the countries speaking in the debate.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman (*spoke in Arabic*): As we near the end of the 1999 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission, I would like, before concluding our meeting, to make a few observations that I feel are important at this stage regarding the work of the Commission, the results we have achieved during this substantive session and the future method of work.

No doubt the early formation of the Bureau of the Commission has had a more than positive effect on the work of this session. In this context, I would like to commend all the regional groups for their constructive cooperation in nominating their candidates in timely fashion. I also wish to thank my colleagues in the Group of African States, who allowed me to take up the position of Chairman on behalf of the African States. I also wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala,

for the pivotal role he played in organizing the work of this session, especially given the fact that its dates conflicted with the dates of other disarmament meetings, which required his personal intervention to reach a final agreement.

The trust that members placed in me, the Bureau and the Disarmament secretariat facilitated our efforts to reach agreement on the three issues on our agenda. We proceeded even more responsibly and diligently when we sensed a sincere wish on the part of participating delegations to reach an agreement. I would like to place on record the fact that all the negotiations took place in a positive and constructive manner, and were aimed at reaching consensus. For this, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all members. I would also like to express my gratitude for the enormous capabilities of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala, which provided us with organizational and technical support as well as expert advice, thereby facilitating my task, as well as those of the Chairmen of the Working Groups and the Bureau. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Petrovsky, and his Deputy, Mr. Bensmail, for their participation.

I also wish to refer to the exceptional ability of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and the Economic and Social Council, which provided support and ensured an atmosphere that allowed us to carry out our mandate.

Without going into the details of what was and was not achieved in the various Working Groups, I would like to place on record that what was achieved was thanks to collective political will in support of the issues on which working papers were adopted. What was achieved was due to the absence of political will, whether on the part of one State or a group of States.

Regardless of the various justifications advanced in this context, I feel that the continuation of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body in which all United Nations Member States are represented requires us all to rethink the way in which our national interests may be preserved within the wider context of our collective interest and to make sure that the necessary political will remains. The work of this Commission should not be considered a forum for achieving national interests to the detriment of the collective interests that we are seeking to realize through responsible discussion aimed at achieving a common goal. Here I would like to express my regret regarding the failure, for the fourth consecutive year, to reach consensus on the objectives and agenda of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, despite the enormous efforts made by Ambassador Arizal Effendi, the Chairman of the relevant Working Group, efforts that were supported by the majority of the delegations participating in the Group's work.

At the same time, a major achievement was made by Working Group III, on the guidelines on conventional arms control/limitation and disarmament, with particular emphasis on consolidation of peace in the context of General Assembly resolution 51/45 N. This achievement was made possible by the wide experience in this field of the Chairman of the Working Group, Mr. Michael Hoey, as well as by the sincere efforts made by all delegations and groups to reach an agreement. This is proof that serious and hard work, when accompanied by political will, can enable us to realize our objectives.

This of course also applies to the major achievement of Working Group I, on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. This achievement also was made possible by the exceptional efforts and experience of the Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador Emilio Izquierdo, as well as by the insistence of a number of delegations that consensus be reached, despite the difficulties that certain paragraphs posed and the lengthy negotiations they required. This is further proof that serious and hard work must be coupled with a genuine desire and political will in order to realize our objectives.

In conclusion, time did not permit the consideration of an important issue: the two items proposed for inclusion on the Disarmament Commission's agenda as of next year, one of these items being on nuclear disarmament. In this context, between the end of this session and the beginning of the work of the First Committee at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, I plan to undertake informal consultations in order to come to an agreement on the adoption of an Assembly resolution regarding the report of the Disarmament Commission and the inclusion of these two items. I look forward to members' support, understanding and ideas during these consultations.

I would like to reiterate my appreciation to all delegations, all my colleagues on the Bureau, the Chairmen of the Working Groups and all the members of

the Secretariat's Department for Disarmament Affairs and Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. I would like to single out Mr. Timur Alasaniya, the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, and Ms. Lidija Komatina, who have made enormous efforts during this session. I would also like to thank the Conference Services staff, the interpreters who have stayed with us until this late hour, the conference officers and the documentation staff.

I now declare closed the 1999 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.